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Bureau of Land Management
Coeur d'Alene District
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Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern Nomination Evaluation Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents BLM's evaluation of 21 Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) nominations, conducted as part of the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan (RMP) development process. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine if the nominated areas meet the criteria required by 43 CFR 1610.7-2. BLM found that all 21 areas met these criteria. Therefore, all will be considered for designation during development of the RMP.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 requires BLM to "give priority to the designation and protection of areas of critical environmental concern" when preparing an RMP. FLPMA defines ACECs as "areas within the public lands where special management attention is required...to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards."

43 CFR 1610.7-2 states that, in order to be a potential ACEC, the criteria for relevance and importance must be met. For relevance, a significant historic, cultural, or scenic value; a fish or wildlife resource or other natural system or process; or a natural hazard must be present in the nominated area. For importance, the relevant value, resource, system, process, or hazard must have qualities of more than local significance and special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern. A natural hazard is important if it is a significant threat to human life or property. The process for evaluating nominated areas against these criteria is further defined in *BLM Manual 1613–Areas of Critical Environmental Concern* (BLM 1988). Those nominated areas that meet the criteria become potential ACECs, and will be considered during preparation of the RMP for designation.

This evaluation does not result in designation of any ACECs. Potential ACECs are proposed for designation if the analysis in the RMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) shows that special management is required to protect the relevant and important values. Designation of proposed ACECs occurs when the Record of Decision (ROD) is signed and the RMP is approved.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CDAFO	Coeur d'Alene Field Office
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
GIS	Geographic Information System
IBA	Important Birding Area
MFP	Management Framework Plan
ONA	Outstanding Natural Area
RAC	Resource Advisory Council
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RNA	Research Natural Area
ROD	Record of Decision

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) states that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will give priority to the designation and protection of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in the development and revision of land use plans. Land use plans in the BLM are known as Resource Management Plans (RMPs) and the Coeur d'Alene Field Office is currently in the multi-year process of developing such a plan.

This RMP will replace the Emerald Empire Management Framework Plan (MFP) that was approved in 1981 and predated BLM's current planning system. In 1981, the BLM did not identify specific areas for ACEC designation. However, in 1985, the Coeur d'Alene BLM District Manager issued an order designating the Hideaway Islands Research Natural Area (RNA)/ACEC. An RNA is an area that is established as an ACEC and is maintained for the primary purpose of research and education in accordance with 43 CFR 8223. Then in 1989 the BLM completed a land use plan amendment which designated one additional RNA/ACEC, Lund Creek.

This report describes BLM's evaluation of 19 newly nominated areas, as well as the re-evaluation of 2 existing ACECs, using the relevance and importance criteria outlined in 43 CFR 1610.7-1 (also listed in the Relevance and Importance Evaluation Section, later in this report). All evaluated areas are located on public land managed by the Coeur d'Alene Field Office. BLM completed these evaluations in accordance with guidance provided in *BLM Manual 1613 – Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*.

WHAT IS AN ACEC?

FLPMA defines an ACEC as an area "within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards." Therefore, private lands and lands administered by other agencies are not included in the boundaries of ACECs. The ACEC designation indicates to the public that the BLM recognizes that an area has significant values and has established special management measures to protect those values. In addition, ACEC designation also serves as a reminder that significant value(s) or resource(s) exist which must be accommodated when future management actions and land use proposals are considered near or within an ACEC.

ACECs differ from other special management designations such as Wilderness Study Areas in that designation by itself does not automatically prohibit or restrict other uses in the area. The one exception is that a mining plan of operation is required for any proposed mining activity within a designated ACEC. The ACEC designation is an administrative designation that is accomplished through the land use planning process. It is unique to the BLM in that no other agency uses this form of designation. The intent of Congress in mandating the designation of ACECs through FLPMA was to give priority

to the designation and protection of areas containing truly unique and significant resource values.

THE ACEC DESIGNATION PROCESS

There are several steps in the identification and evaluation of ACECs. These steps include: (1) Nomination of existing or new areas to be considered for ACEC designation; (2) Evaluation of the nominated areas to determine if they meet the relevance and importance criteria; (3) Consideration and analysis of the potential ACECs as management alternatives in the RMP and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); (4) Public comment on the proposed ACEC designations in the RMP/EIS; and (5) Designation of ACECs in the Record of Decision that approves the RMP. Each of these steps is further described below.

Identification/Nomination. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern are identified, nominated, and designated through the BLM's land use planning process. Nominations from the public are accepted as part of the scoping process during development of a land use plan. All existing ACECs are considered nominations.

Evaluation of Nominations for Relevance and Importance. Nominations are evaluated to determine whether they meet the relevance and importance criteria. For a detailed description of these criteria, see the section called Relevance and Importance Evaluation, found on page five of this report. A nomination must meet one or more of the relevance and importance criteria to be considered a potential ACEC. Potential ACECs are then considered further in the planning process.

Consideration and Analysis of Potential ACECs. Potential ACECs are considered as RMP alternatives are developed. Each potential ACEC is proposed for designation in at least one of the management alternatives. The need for special management and the resulting effects from applying such management are assessed in the associated environmental analysis (EIS). A potential ACEC is proposed for designation if the area requires special management. Special management is defined as management outside of standard or routine practices, and usually includes more detail than other prescriptions contained within the plan. Special management is usually needed when one of the following conditions is met:

- Current management or management activities proposed in the alternative are not sufficient to protect the relevant and important resource.
- The needed management action is considered unusual or outside of the normal range of management practices typically used.
- The change in management is difficult to implement without ACEC designation.

Comment on Proposed ACECs. BLM releases the Draft RMP/EIS, containing the alternatives for ACEC designation, for a 90-day public review and comment period. The public may comment on any aspect of the ACEC analysis at this point in the process. These comments are then considered in preparation of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is release to the public for a 30-day protest period. During this period the public may protest proposed land use decisions in the document, including those designating ACECs.

Designation. BLM will resolve all protest prior to preparing a Record of Decision that approves the RMP, which includes ACEC designations.

Research Natural Areas (RNA) and Outstanding Natural Areas (ONA)

ACECs may be further classified as RNAs or ONAs if they meet certain requirements for these types of designations. Those nominations which meet these requirements are identified later in this report, in the Relevance and Importance Evaluation section.

RNA: An RNA is defined in 43 CFR 8223.0-5 as "an area that is established and maintained for the primary purpose of research and education because the land has one or more of the following characteristics:

- A typical representation of a common plant or animal association;
- An unusual plant or animal association;
- A threatened or endangered plant or animal species;
- A typical representation of common geologic, soil, or water features;
- Outstanding or unusual geologic, soil, or water features."

ONA: An administratively designated ONA is an area which contains unusual natural characteristics and is managed primarily for educational and recreational purposes.

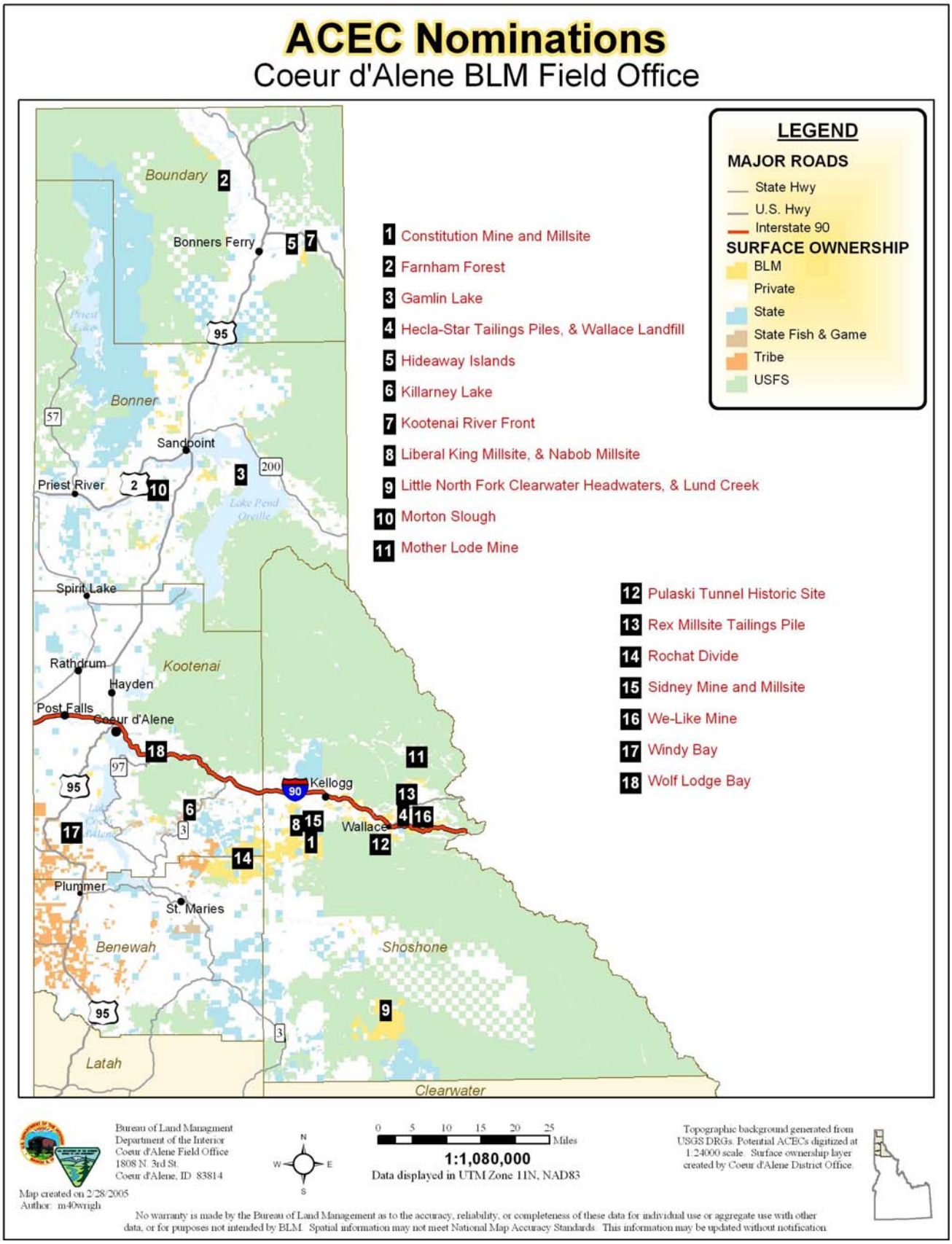
Nominations

Public scoping for the Coeur d'Alene RMP effort included solicitation of nominations for ACEC designations from the public. Scoping began with the publication of a Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* on September 3, 2004. BLM distributed newsletters and held public scoping meetings in October 2004. In these publications and meetings, BLM solicited comments from the public on land use planning issues and planning criteria. BLM specifically identified and asked for public comment on the potential issue of special designations (ACECs and Wild and Scenic Rivers). BLM received several

comments supporting the designation of ACECs in general; however, no new nominations were identified. The public scoping period officially ended on November 15, 2004.

Although the public made no nominations, the BLM interdisciplinary planning team identified 19 new areas with special values. With the two previously designated ACECs, BLM had a total of 21 nominations to evaluate. A map showing the locations of the nominated ACECs appears on page 4. These areas are:

Constitution Mine and Millsite
Farnham Forest
Gamlin Lake
Hecla-Star Tailings Piles
Hideaway Islands (existing RNA/ACEC)
Killarney Lake
Kootenai River Front
Liberal King Millsite
Little North Fork Clearwater Headwaters
Lund Creek (existing RNA/ACEC)
Morton Slough
Mother Lode Mine
Nabob Millsite
Pulaski Tunnel Historic Site
Rex Millsite Mine Tailings Pile
Rochat Divide
Sidney Mine and Millsite
Wallace Landfill
We-Like Mine
Windy Bay
Wolf Lodge Bay


ACEC Nominations
Coeur d'Alene BLM Field Office
LEGEND
MAJOR ROADS
State Hwy
U.S. Hwy
Interstate 90
SURFACE OWNERSHIP
BLM
Private
State
State Fish & Game
Tribe
USFS
1 Constitution Mine and Millsite
2 Farnham Forest
3 Gamlin Lake
4 Hecla-Star Tailings Piles, & Wallace Landfill
5 Hideaway Islands
6 Killarney Lake
7 Kootenai River Front
8 Liberal King Millsite, & Nabob Millsite
9 Little North Fork Clearwater Headwaters, & Lund Creek
10 Morton Slough
11 Mother Lode Mine
12 Pulaski Tunnel Historic Site
13 Rex Millsite Tailings Pile
14 Rochat Divide
15 Sidney Mine and Millsite
16 We-Like Mine
17 Windy Bay
18 Wolf Lodge Bay
Boundary
Bonners Ferry
Bonner
Sandpoint
Priest River
Spirit Lake
Rathdrum
Hayden
Post Falls
Coeur d'Alene
Kootenai
Kellogg
Wallace
Plummer
St. Maries
Benewah
Shoshone
Latah
Clearwater
Lake Pend Oreille
Priest Lake
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3
Bureau of Land Managment
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1808 N. 3rd St.
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
Map created on 2/28/2005
Author: m40wrigh
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1:1,080,000
Data displayed in UTM Zone 11N, NAD83
Topographic background generated from USGS DRGs. Potential ACECs digitized at 1:24000 scale. Surface ownership layer created by Coeur d'Alene District Office.
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE EVALUATIONS

Relevance: An area meets the relevance criteria if it contains one or more of the following:

1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to native Americans).

2. A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species, or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).

3. A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).

4. Natural hazards (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action may meet the relevance criteria if it is determined through the RMP process that it has become part of a natural process.

Importance: The value, resource, system, process, or hazard described in the relevance section must have substantial significance and values to meet the importance criteria. This generally means that the value, resource, system, process, or hazard is characterized by one or more of the following:

1. Has more than locally significant qualities which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.

2. Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.

3. Has been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.

4. Has qualities that warrant highlighting in order to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.

5. Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.

The information which follows is organized in alphabetical order by name of the nominated area. Appendix A contains detailed maps of the areas.

Constitution Mine and Millsite (See Map 1 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: The Constitution Mine and Millsite are partially located on public land managed by BLM in the upper East Fork of Pine Creek, about nine miles southeast of Pinehurst, in Shoshone County Idaho. The portion on public land managed by BLM includes the gated upper mine portal, the upper mill foundations, the upper part of the mine tailings piles associated with the upper mill, and a passive bioreactor mine water treatment system. BLM has undertaken staged removal actions on the mine, mill area, and upper tailings piles to reduce site hazards.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a natural hazard. As part of the planned remedial actions at the site, mine tailings containing heavy metals will remain and be capped onsite. These metals are susceptible to leaching through natural processes into the surrounding environment. The bioreactor will continue to operate, removing and storing heavy metals within the treatment system onsite. The mine and mill concrete foundations and walls, which have been left to reflect local mining history, could present physical hazards for the public.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for safety and public welfare, and threat to human life and safety or property. The principal threat is the mine tailings because heavy metal concentrations are well above background levels and long term exposure guidelines for humans and wildlife. The metals are also susceptible to leaching through natural processes into the surrounding environment. The bioreactor is also of significant concern because it is an open, anaerobic bacteria treatment system which could be a long-term safety risk for the public if access is not restricted. The physical hazards of the remaining mill foundations and walls, and the gated mine portal pose additional threats to public safety.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a natural hazard, safety and public welfare, and threat to human life and safety or property, and will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Farnham Forest (See Map 2 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: This area is located approximately 12 air miles northwest of Bonners Ferry, in Boundary County Idaho, along the eastern margin of the Selkirk Mountains. Farnham Forest is composed of a mixture of tree species, ranging from ponderosa pine to western red cedar and western hemlock. The oldest trees at this site are approaching or exceed 300 years old.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource, and a natural process or system. Farnham Forest is within the designated recovery zone for grizzly bears (threatened). This area has been identified by Partners-In-Flight as an Important Birding Area (IBA) at the local level. Partners-In-Flight is a coalition of agency and

private organizations interested in migratory birds, which identifies IBAs at the local, state, national, and global scale. Acres covered by old forest communities have declined significantly in northern Idaho compared with historic conditions (Quigley et al. 1997).

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for more than local significance and for qualities or circumstances which make it rare, irreplaceable, and vulnerable to adverse change. The area provides habitat for a federally listed species, and the old forest community at Farnham Forest is irreplaceable and vulnerable to adverse change.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource, a natural process or system, and provides habitat for a federally listed threatened species. Therefore, it will be carried forward for consideration as a potential RNA/ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan. RNA designation is recommended because the old forest community is a typical representation of a common plant or animal association in an ecological stage which has significantly declined in northern Idaho, and would provide educational and research opportunities.

Gamlin Lake (See Map 3 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: This lake lies approximately 8 air miles southeast of Sandpoint and one air mile west of Lake Pend Oreille in Bonner County Idaho. The area nominated for ACEC designation includes approximately 59 of the 418 acres that BLM manages surrounding Gamlin Lake. Within this area, upland forest, meadow, riparian, and wetland plant communities are present. Technically speaking, these wetlands may be more accurately labeled peatlands, which have waterlogged substrates and at least 12 inches of peat accumulation.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource, and a natural process or system. The site provides habitat for migratory birds. This area has been identified by Partners-In-Flight as an Important Birding Area (IBA) at the local level. Partners-In-Flight is a coalition of agency and private organizations interested in migratory birds, which identifies IBAs at the local, state, national, and global scale. Five BLM sensitive plant species occur in the peatland and riparian communities (bristly sedge, bulb-bearing water hemlock, large Canadian St. John's-wort, Mingan moonwort, and water clubrush).

Importance Criteria: The area meets the importance criteria for more than local significance, and qualities that make it sensitive or rare. The area provides habitat for BLM sensitive species and other natural processes. In Idaho, low and mid-elevation peatlands of the type that occur at Gamlin Lake, have been recognized as important habitats characterized by a unique suite of environmental conditions and hosting more than 40 rare plant and animal species (Bursik and Moseley 1995). Compared to the largely unbroken stretches of peatlands located more than 600 miles to the north, Idaho peatlands, particularly low elevation valley peatlands, are rare.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource, a natural process or system, and provides habitat for BLM sensitive species. Therefore, it will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Hecla-Star Tailings Piles (See Map 4 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: The Hecla-Star mine tailings piles are partially located on public land managed by BLM along lower Canyon Creek, approximately two miles northeast of Wallace, in Shoshone County Idaho. Two tailings piles and half of a third pile are on public land managed by BLM, covering about a half mile of floodplain, or 22 acres. The tailings piles on public land managed by BLM are part of a complex of six tailings piles covering about one mile of the lower Canyon Creek floodplain.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a natural hazard. As part of the planned remedial actions at the site, mine tailings containing heavy metals will likely remain onsite. The tailings are over twenty feet deep and are covered with leveled soil or rock caps. The heavy metals are susceptible to leaching through natural processes into the surrounding environment. Presently, a pilot water treatment plant is located on the top of the most upstream pile. Water discharging from the Gem Mine upstream is piped to the treatment plant, where part of the flow is treated and then released along with the remaining untreated water into Canyon Creek.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for safety and public welfare, and threat to human health and safety or property. The principal threat is the mine tailings because heavy metal concentrations are above background levels and long term exposure guidelines for humans and wildlife. The tailings are presently capped, but the metals are still susceptible to leaching through natural processes into the surrounding environment. There is also a threat of potential erosion from extreme flood events, since Canyon Creek flows along the south side of the piles.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a natural hazard, safety and public welfare, and threat to human life and safety or property. Therefore, it will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Hideaway Islands (See Map 5 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: This is an existing RNA/ACEC consisting of two islands along the Kootenai River, located approximately five air miles east of Bonners Ferry, in Boundary County Idaho. The Hideaway Islands were designated as an RNA/ACEC in 1985 to preserve riparian plant communities in an unmodified condition for the primary purpose of research and education. The RNA/ACEC was listed as 170 acres in size when it was

designated. However, recent, more accurate Geographic Information System (GIS) calculations determined the size of the RNA/ACEC to be 76 acres. Hideaway Islands are managed by BLM in a non-destructive and non-manipulative manner.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource, and a natural process or system. A pair of bald eagles (threatened) established a nest on Hideaway Islands in 1995 and has successfully raised their young there. The islands contain a good example of a black cottonwood/red-osier dogwood riparian plant community in various stages of ecological succession. Three species of cottonwood are found on the islands: Black cottonwood, narrowleaf cottonwood, and eastern cottonwood. Eastern cottonwood is an eastern United States disjunct species that is uncommon in Idaho. The black cottonwood/red-osier dogwood community type is considered very rare in Idaho, with five or fewer occurrences known statewide. A western choke cherry and a Suksdorf hawthorn at this site have been measured as the largest in Idaho.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for more than local significance, and qualities or circumstances which make it rare, irreplaceable, and vulnerable to adverse change. The area provides habitat for a federally listed species.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource, a natural process or system, and provides habitat for BLM sensitive species. Therefore, it will be carried forward for consideration as a potential RNA/ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Killarney Lake (See Map 6 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: This area includes all public land managed by BLM around Killarney Lake and the wetland tract on the southeast side of the lake in the Lower Coeur d'Alene River floodplain. It is about five air miles west of the community of Rose Lake, in Kootenai County Idaho.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource, and a natural hazard. Bull trout (threatened) use Lake Coeur d'Alene for adult/subadult rearing and use the Coeur d'Alene River as a migration corridor. One pair of bald eagles (threatened) has been nesting within a mile of these lands. Migratory birds use the area. The lake and floodplain have been contaminated by mine tailings transported down the Coeur d'Alene River system from the upstream historic mining areas. The principal hazard is the heavy metal concentrations in the tailings that are well above background levels and long term exposure guidelines for humans and wildlife. Studies have shown high metals concentrations in this area have killed or injured tundra swans and other waterfowl (Chupp and Dalke 1964).

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for safety and public welfare, a threat to human health and safety or property, and has sensitive and

vulnerable wildlife issues. The tailings and associated water quality issues are a threat to the public, as well as to wildlife. BLM has implemented measures to protect the public from the tailings around the developed recreation sites at Killarney Lake. However, migratory birds are still exposed to heavy metals through contact with sediments. The heavy metals concentrations of tailings in the undeveloped floodplain areas are above background levels and long term exposure guidelines for humans and wildlife.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource, safety and public welfare, and threat to human life and safety or property. Therefore it will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Kootenai River Front (See Map 7 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: This area is in Boundary County, Idaho and includes all public land managed by BLM along the Kootenai River within the canyon, beginning approximately five air miles east of Bonners Ferry at Hideaway Islands, and continuing upstream to the Idaho-Montana state line.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource. Kootenai River sturgeon (endangered), bull trout (threatened) and westslope cutthroat trout (BLM sensitive) use the Kootenai River. One pair of bald eagles (threatened) has been nesting within the canyon since 1990, and a second pair of eagles has been nesting there since 1996, with both eagle pairs having successfully reproduced. Annual monitoring of all bald eagle nests from Bonners Ferry upstream to the Idaho-Montana Stateline has documented the pairs of birds moving to new nest trees within their established nesting territory. Therefore, any and all BLM public lands could provide potential nest sites. An average of ten bald eagles has wintered along the Kootenai River from Bonners Ferry to the Idaho-Montana stateline since 1980, when biologists began monitoring mid-winter populations of eagles.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for more than local significance, and qualities or circumstances that make it endangered and/or threatened. This area provides habitat for federally listed threatened and endangered species.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource, and a natural process or system, and provides habitat for federally listed threatened and endangered species. Therefore it will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Liberal King Millsite (See Map 8 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: The Liberal King Millsite is located on a hillside overlooking Pine Creek, about three air miles south of Pinehurst, in Shoshone County Idaho. The abandoned mill buildings and southern part of the rock dump are on public land managed by BLM. The mine and the northern part of the rock dump are on private land.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for cultural value and a natural hazard. It has the only example of a standing mining mill site in federal ownership in the Silver Valley, an area where mining has played a significant part in local history. The main mill building is a highly visible example of historic mining structures. The site meets the criteria for natural hazard because high concentrations of heavy metals remain in the mill area and may be subsequently released by natural processes into the surrounding environment.

Importance Criteria: The nomination meets the importance criteria for more than local significance, and irreplaceable qualities. This nomination also meets the criteria for safety and public welfare, and threat to human health and safety or property. The principal threat is the mill area because heavy metal concentrations are well above background levels and long term exposure guidelines for humans and wildlife. The metals are also susceptible to leaching through natural processes into the surrounding environment. The safety concerns are physical hazards and contaminants associated with the mill buildings and rock dump.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for cultural value, a natural hazard, safety and public welfare, and threat to human life and safety or property, and will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Little North Fork Clearwater Headwaters (See Map 9 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: This nomination includes public land managed by BLM associated with the system of streams that join together to form the headwaters of the Little North Fork Clearwater River, and the Marble Creek headwaters vicinity (including Freezeout and Delaney Creeks) located approximately 15 air miles northeast of Clarkia, in Shoshone County Idaho. A portion of the area was proposed as an Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) in 1986 by the North Idaho Proposed MFP Amendment and Final EIS for Wilderness but was never formally designated. It is adjacent to the existing Lund Creek RNA/ACEC.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for scenic value, and a fish and wildlife resource. The scenery is rated as Class A, meaning it is distinctive within its physiographic setting. Bull trout (threatened) and westslope cutthroat trout (BLM sensitive) use this segment of the Clearwater River for spawning, rearing, and as

a migration corridor. The upper portion of Marble Creek itself provides spawning and rearing habitat for westslope cutthroat trout. Bull trout use the portion of Marble Creek downstream of the BLM lands for spawning and rearing. Suitable habitat for the Coeur d'Alene salamander (BLM sensitive) exists within this portion of the Clearwater River system.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for more than local significance, and qualities or circumstances that make it threatened, exemplary, or unique. This area provides habitat for federally listed and BLM sensitive species.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for scenic value, a fish and wildlife resource, and provides habitat for BLM sensitive species. The combination of unusual scenic, fisheries, and wildlife resources meets the requirement for an ONA. Therefore it will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ONA/ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Lund Creek (See Map 9 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: This is an existing RNA/ACEC. It includes 2905 acres of public land, and is located approximately 15 air miles east of Clarkia, in Shoshone County Idaho. It was designated in 1989 to protect unique natural features and ecological diversity. Scientists and educators are encouraged to use the area for study purposes; however, all uses must be non-destructive. No vegetative manipulation (including timber harvest) or vehicle use is permitted.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for scenic value, a fish and wildlife resource, and a natural process or system. The scenery in the Lund Creek area is rated as Class A, meaning it is distinctive within its physiographic setting. Bull trout (threatened) and westslope cutthroat trout (BLM sensitive) use this stream for spawning and rearing. Suitable habitat for the Coeur d'Alene salamander (BLM sensitive) is present. Old growth mountain hemlock and subalpine fir are found in the drainage. A number of aquatic features such as Little Lost Lake, bogs, marshes, streams, and waterfalls are present. Lund Creek itself and its associated riparian plant community are rated as being in very good ecological condition. Bogs and marshes in the Grandmother Mountain area are considered subalpine peatlands, characterized by a mixture of plant species common to the mountain systems of western North America, as well as plant species more typical of boreal habitats occurring hundreds of miles north of the planning area. Although peatlands comprise a very small percentage of vegetation across the landscape, they are among the most floristically diverse vegetation types.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for more than local significance, and qualities or circumstances which make it rare, irreplaceable, threatened, and vulnerable to adverse change. This area provides habitat for federally listed and BLM sensitive species.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for scenic value, a fish and wildlife resource, a natural process or system, and provides habitat for BLM sensitive species. Therefore it will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Morton Slough (See Map 11 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: This nomination consists of three isolated tracts totaling 119 acres in the vicinity of Morton Slough, which is connected to the Pend Oreille River. The tracts are located approximately eight miles southwest of Sandpoint, in Bonner County Idaho.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource and a natural process or system. A pair of bald eagles (threatened) first nested on one of the parcels in 1995 and has successfully reproduced there. The 400-acre slough area along the Pend Oreille River has been identified by Partners-In-Flight as an Important Birding Area (IBA) at the state level. This organization also acknowledges the eagle nest on public land managed by BLM. Partners-In-Flight is a coalition of agency and private organizations interested in migratory birds, which identifies IBAs at the local, state, national, and global scale. Old-growth ponderosa pine occurs on the other two parcels. The scientific assessment done for the Interior Columbia Basin found that vegetation has changed significantly from historic conditions, especially the loss of "open" stands of mature and old growth ponderosa pine forests (Quigley et al. 1997, Wisdom et al. 2000). This area provides habitat for BLM sensitive wildlife species that are associated with mature and old growth ponderosa pine stands.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for more than local significance, and qualities or circumstances which make it rare, irreplaceable, and vulnerable to adverse change. Researchers report that 60-70% of old-growth ponderosa pine forests in Idaho have been degraded due to fire suppression and selective logging of larger-diameter trees (Noss et al. 1995). The old growth ponderosa pine stands within this nominated area are among the few that have not been degraded. This area also provides habitat for federally listed species, BLM sensitive species, and species linked to old growth ponderosa pine ecosystems.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource, and a natural process or system, and provides habitat for BLM sensitive species. Therefore, it will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Mother Lode Mine (See Map 12 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: The Mother Lode Mine is located partly on public land managed by BLM along Prichard Creek, approximately two miles east of Murray, in Shoshone

County Idaho. The gated mine portal, a steep re-graded rock dump, and a passive bioreactor mine water treatment system are on public land managed by BLM.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a natural hazard. Although removal actions have occurred at the site, some heavy metals contamination remains in the vicinity of the mine. These heavy metals are susceptible to leaching through natural processes into the surrounding environment. Water with high heavy metals levels will continue to discharge from the mine. The bioreactor will continue to operate, removing and storing heavy metals within the treatment system onsite.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for safety and public welfare, and threat to human health and safety or property. The principal threat is the mine discharge and mine wastes because heavy metal concentrations are well above background levels and long term exposure guidelines for humans and wildlife. The bioreactor is also of significant concern because it is an open, anaerobic bacteria treatment system which could be a long-term safety risk for the public if access is not restricted. Another safety issue is the potential physical hazard from the gated mine portal.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a natural hazard, safety and public welfare, and threat to human life and safety or property. Therefore it will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Nabob Millsite (See Map 8 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: The Nabob Millsite is located partly on public land managed by BLM at the mouth of Nabob Creek in the lower East Fork of Pine Creek, about four air miles south of Pinehurst, in Shoshone County Idaho. The mine tailings pile from the current mill, the old mill foundations, and the current mill buildings are on public land managed by BLM. BLM and the mill operator have undertaken staged removal actions on the tailings pile to reduce site hazards due to high heavy metal concentrations. The mill building is still under a millsite claim, and the operator has been removing equipment and parts of the building structure.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a natural hazard. As part of the removal actions and planned remedial actions at the site, mine tailings containing heavy metals will remain and be capped onsite. The metals are susceptible to leaching through natural processes into the surrounding environment. The tailings are over forty feet deep, and Nabob Creek flows along the south side of the tailings embankment.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for safety and public welfare, and threat to human health and safety or property. The principal threat is the tailings and mill area because heavy metals concentrations are well above background levels and long term exposure guidelines for humans and wildlife. The

safety concerns are the physical hazards and contaminants around the mill buildings, and the stability of the tailings pile and potential erosion from creek flooding.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a natural hazard, safety and public welfare, and threat to human life and safety or property, and will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Pulaski Tunnel Historic Site (See Map 12 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: The Pulaski Tunnel is located about one mile southwest of Wallace, in Shoshone County Idaho. The area is in a steep-sided creek bottom and includes a mine adit (referred to as a tunnel) and trail.

Relevance Criteria: The Pulaski Tunnel area meets the relevance criteria since it is a significant cultural resource site associated with saving the lives of firefighters in the 1910 fires. The site, which is a mine adit originally used for mining and then later used by Pulaski to save his crew from being overtaken by a raging fire, is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Importance Criteria: The site meets the importance criteria since it represents a significant event in our history and is recognized as having national significance. This area could be threatened by future mining activity.

Findings: This site meets the relevance and importance criteria for historic and cultural values and will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Rex Millsite Mine Tailings Pile (See Map 13 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: The Rex Millsite Mine Tailings Pile is located partially on public land managed by BLM, in a draw above the East Fork of Nine Mile Creek, approximately six air miles northeast of Wallace, in Shoshone County Idaho. Over half of the tailings pile and a dam between the draw and the tailings pile are located on public land. The Rex Mine, rock dump and mill, and the rest of the tailings pile are on private land, and are therefore not part of the nominated area.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a natural hazard. As part of the planned remedial actions at the site, mine tailings containing heavy metals will likely remain onsite. The tailings are presently exposed (not capped), with the metals susceptible to leaching through natural processes into the surrounding environment. The tailings are over sixty feet deep, and the dam face measures over

110 feet high down to the draw. The creek has been diverted to flow along the southeast edge of the dam.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for safety and public welfare, and threat to human health and safety or property. The principal threat is the tailings because heavy metal concentrations are well above background levels and long term exposure guidelines for humans and wildlife. The safety concerns are physical hazards, the stability of the tailings pile and dam, and potential erosion of the tailings due to flooding.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a natural hazard, safety and public welfare, and threat to human life and safety or property, and will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Rochat Divide (See Map 14 in Appendix A)

Description of the Area: This area is located in Benewah, Kootenai, and Shoshone Counties of Idaho, on the major watershed divide between the St. Joe River and Coeur d'Alene River. The south end is near St. Joe Baldy peak and the area trends north to Latour Baldy peak. Latour Baldy lies approximately 6 miles southwest of Pinehurst, Idaho. A portion of the area was proposed as an ONA in 1986 by the North Idaho Proposed MFP Amendment and Final EIS for Wilderness but was never formally designated. The area has virtually unlimited vistas and opportunity for solitude. It is important for past and current Native American spiritual use, scenic qualities, and important wildlife habitat.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for cultural, scenic, and wildlife resources. The divide between the two major river drainages serves as a significant spiritual area for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. The area offers outstanding views of the region and possesses Class A scenery, meaning it is distinctive within its physiographic setting. The area provides habitat for the wolverine (BLM sensitive). Female wolverines den underneath boulders and snow within the area's cirque basins.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for qualities or circumstances which make it rare, irreplaceable, and vulnerable to adverse change. Scenic values are rated high for this area, and the viewshed is very vulnerable to adverse change. Research in the Sawtooth Mountains of central Idaho demonstrated that human disturbance near wolverine den sites will cause the female to abandon her den and her young inside (Copeland 1996). This area also meets the importance criteria for cultural because of its spiritual values for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for cultural, scenic, and wildlife. The combination of unusual cultural, scenic, and wildlife resources

meets the requirement for an ONA. Therefore it will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ONA/ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan

Sidney Mine and Millsite (See Map 15 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: The Sidney Mine and Millsite are located largely on public land managed by BLM in upper Red Cloud Creek, a tributary to Highland Creek in the East Fork of Pine Creek drainage, approximately 4 air miles southeast of Pinehurst, in Shoshone County Idaho. The gated mine portal, the main mill foundations, the steep-sloped upper rock dump, and a passive bioreactor mine water treatment system are on public land. To reduce the site hazards BLM has undertaken staged removal actions at the mine, mill area, stream diversion, and upper rock dump.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a natural hazard. Even after removal actions at the site, some mine- and rock dump-area heavy metals contamination will remain. These metals are susceptible to leaching through natural processes into the surrounding environment. Water with high metals levels will continue to discharge from the mine. The bioreactor will continue to operate, removing and storing metals within the system onsite.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for safety and public welfare and threat to human health and safety or property. The principal threat is the mine discharge and mill wastes because heavy metals concentrations are well above background levels and long term exposure guidelines for humans and wildlife. The bioreactor is also of significant concern because it is an open, anaerobic bacteria treatment system which could be a long-term safety risk for the public if access is not restricted. The physical hazards of the remaining mill foundations and walls, the steep rock dump, and the gated mine portal pose additional threats to public safety.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a natural hazard, safety and public welfare, and threat to human life and safety or property, and will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Wallace Landfill (See Map 4 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: A portion of the southeast corner of the Wallace Landfill is located on public land managed by BLM in Lower Canyon Creek, approximately 1 air mile northeast of Wallace, in Shoshone County Idaho.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a natural hazard. The landfill has buried deleterious materials. Seepage of potentially contaminated ground water and precipitation run-off from the site has been observed near the creek.

Potentially hazardous materials located at the site are susceptible to erosion or leaching through natural processes into the surrounding environment.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for safety and public welfare, and threat to human health and safety or property. The main safety concern is the buried deleterious materials. The principal threat comes from leached substances and buried materials.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a natural hazard, safety and public welfare, and threat to human life and safety or property, and will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

We-Like Mine (See Map 16 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: The We-Like Mine is located largely on public land managed by BLM in Grouse Creek approximately two air miles northwest of Mullan, in Shoshone County Idaho. The site includes the gated mine portal, a steep-sloped rock dump, and a pilot passive bioreactor mine water treatment system.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a natural hazard. With the planned remediation at the site, some mine-area heavy metals contamination will remain. These metals are susceptible to leaching through natural processes into the surrounding environment. Water with high metals level will continue to discharge from the mine. The bioreactor will continue to operate, removing and storing metals within the system onsite.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for safety and public welfare, and threat to human health and safety or property. The principal threat is the mine discharge and mine wastes because heavy metals concentrations are well above background levels and long term exposure guidelines for humans and wildlife. The metals also are susceptible to leaching through natural processes into the surrounding environment. The bioreactor is also a concern because it is an anaerobic bacteria treatment tank system which could be a long-term safety risk for the public if access is not restricted. There are also physical hazards onsite, including the gated mine portal and steep rock dump, which pose additional threats to public safety.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a natural hazard, safety and public welfare, and threat to human life and safety or property, and will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Windy Bay (See Map 17 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: This area is located approximately 4 air miles north of Worley, in Kootenai County Idaho, along the south side of Windy Bay on Lake Coeur d'Alene. A small remnant (16 acres) of rough fescue grassland grows along the edge of the bluff above the bay, situated between gently-rolling agricultural fields and the steep, forested hillsides that descend down to the bay.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a natural process or system. Rough fescue grassland is very rare in Idaho, known from less than five scattered sites along the eastern margin of the Palouse Prairie.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for more than local significance, and qualities or circumstances which make it rare, irreplaceable, and vulnerable to adverse change. Nearly 100% of the area historically occupied by the Palouse Prairie in eastern Washington and adjacent Idaho has been converted to agricultural use. Remnants of Palouse Prairie vegetation, which includes rough fescue grassland along the eastern boundary, are now restricted to edges of cultivated fields or rocky slopes along the margins of the former Prairie (Lichthardt and Moseley 1997). The Palouse Prairie is considered one of the most endangered ecosystems in the United States (Noss 1995, Noss et al. 1995).

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for a natural process or system and will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

Wolf Lodge Bay (See Map 18 in Appendix A)

Description of Area: This area includes all the public land managed by BLM surrounding Wolf Lodge, Beauty, and Blue Creek Bays of Lake Coeur d'Alene. These bays are located approximately 5 air miles southeast of Coeur d'Alene, in Kootenai County Idaho.

Relevance Criteria: This nomination meets the relevance criteria for a fish and wildlife resource. Bull trout (threatened) and westslope cutthroat trout (BLM sensitive) use portions of the lake for adult/subadult rearing. Blue Creek also provides spawning and rearing habitat for westslope cutthroat trout. Migratory bald eagles (threatened) use the area for foraging and over-wintering habitat. The first Coeur d'Alene salamander (BLM sensitive) known to science was observed along the water's edge of Wolf Lodge Bay. Other BLM sensitive and migratory birds use the area. Partners-In-Flight, which is a coalition of agency and private organizations interested in migratory birds, have identified Important Birding Areas (IBA) at the local, state, national, and global scale. This area is an IBA at the state level.

Importance Criteria: This nomination meets the importance criteria for more than locally significant, and qualities or circumstances which make it threatened or endangered. This area provides habitat for federally listed and BLM sensitive species.

Findings: This nomination meets the relevance and importance criteria for fish and wildlife resource, provides habitat for BLM sensitive species, and will be carried forward for consideration as a potential ACEC in the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

BLM found that all 21 areas nominated for ACEC status met the relevance and importance criteria. These areas are now referred to as "Potential ACECs" and will be considered and further analyzed in the alternatives for the RMP. Table 1 contains a summary of these potential areas.

Table 1: Potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Area Name	Values	Acres
Constitution Mine & Millsite	Mine tailings hazard, bioreactor safety concern, cultural	6
Farnham Forest	Grizzly bear, old growth forest	29
Gamlin Lake	Wetland and riparian areas, Idaho BLM sensitive plant species, migratory birds	59
Hecla-Star Tailings Piles	Mine tailings hazard	22
Hideaway Islands	Designated RNA/ACEC, bald eagles, rare riparian plant community	76
Killarney Lake	Bull trout, bald eagles, migratory birds, mine tailings hazard	69
Kootenai River Front	Kootenai River sturgeon, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, bald eagles	533
Liberal King Millsite	Historic/cultural, heavy metals hazard, mill buildings and rock dump safety concerns	2
Little North Fork Clearwater River	Scenic, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, habitat for Coeur d'Alene salamander	9592
Lund Creek	Designated RNA/ACEC, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, habitat for Coeur d'Alene salamander, old growth mountain hemlock and subalpine fir, Little Lost Lake, wetland and riparian communities	2905
Morton Slough	Bald eagles, old growth ponderosa pine, habitat for BLM Sensitive wildlife	119
Mother Lode Mine	Heavy metals hazard, bioreactor safety concern	0.80

Table 1: Potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Area Name	Values	Acres
Nabob Millsite	Mine tailings hazard, mill buildings safety concern	8
Pulaski Tunnel Historic Site	Historic, cultural	58
Rex Millsite Tailings Pile	Mine tailings hazard, dam stability issue	6
Rochat Divide	Cultural, scenic, wolverine	11,653
Sidney Mine & Millsite	Heavy metals hazard, rock dump, bioreactor safety concern	6
Wallace Landfill	Deleterious materials hazard, contaminated seepage and run-off	0.3
We-Like Mine	Heavy metals hazard, rock dump, bioreactor safety concern	0.3
Windy Bay	Rare grassland plant community	16
Wolf Lodge Bay	Bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, bald eagles, Coeur d'Alene salamander, migratory birds	1094

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APPENDIX A: Maps of Potential ACECs

See page 4 of this report for a map that shows the general location of each nominate/potential ACEC.

Map1: Constitution Mine and Millsite

Map 2: Farnham Forest

Map 3: Gamlin Lake

Map 4: Hecla-Star Tailings Piles *and* Wallace Landfill

Map 5: Hideaway Islands

Map 6: Killarney Lake

Map 7: Kootenai River Front

Map 8: Liberal King Millsite *and* Nabob Millsite

Map 9: Little North Fork Clearwater Headwaters *and* Lund Creek

Map 10: Morton Slough

Map 11: Mother Lode Mine

Map 12: Pulaski Tunnel Historic Site

Map 13: Rex Millsite Mine Tailings Pile

Map 14: Rochat Divide

Map 15: Sidney Mine and Millsite

Map 16: We-Like Mine

Map 17: Windy Bay

Map 18: Wolf Lodge Bay